

Executive Summary Abridged Campus Climate Report

Overview

In November 2016, UMass Amherst conducted a Campus Climate Survey, a web-based questionnaire that asked students, staff, and faculty about:

- Perceptions of the inclusiveness of the campus community overall
- Experiences and interactions within classrooms, schools/colleges, workplace environments, and the surrounding community
- Experiences and interactions shaped by social identity
- Perceptions of the university's response to unfair treatment
- Changes needed to make UMass Amherst a more welcoming and inclusive place for all

We wanted to assess whether our values were reflected in the daily experience of members of the campus community in order to better understand the challenges of creating an environment that is respectful and inclusive for all.

Survey Design and Administration

The UMass Amherst Campus Climate Survey was designed in-house by a team of institutional researchers and social science faculty. The survey included a 100-item "common core" focused on perceptions and experiences at UMass Amherst, as well as questions pertaining to social identity aspects and item sets tailored to each of four main target populations (undergraduate students, graduate students, staff, and faculty). The online "census" survey was administered via Qualtrics™ and conducted November 13 through December 4, 2016. To facilitate accessibility, the staff version of the survey was available as a confidential paper survey and translated into seven languages.

Participation Rates

The climate survey's overall response rate was 41 percent. Participation rates varied across the four target populations as follows: 38 percent for undergraduate students (n = 8,323), 39 percent for graduate students (n = 1,584), 49 percent for staff (n = 2,731), and 61 percent for faculty (n = 1,064).

Demographic Representativeness

In order to assess potential nonresponse bias, researchers compared target population and survey participant demographics. Overall, survey participants are a close match for the campus population. For more information on matching by population, see the "Background and Methods" section of the abridged report.



Abridged Report

In order to share results with the campus community before the end of the school year, analysis and reporting were separated into two phases. Phase 1, the abridged report, provides an overview of the data gathered and an initial analysis. Phase 2, the comprehensive report scheduled for release in fall 2017, will cover all of the measures included in the climate survey, and will pay specific attention to intersecting social identities.

The abridged report contains 6 sections:

- 1. Background and Methods:** Learn about our approach to the campus climate survey design and extensive outreach to obtain survey responses from a representative cross-section of the UMass Amherst community. Each section of this abridged report features visual illustrations of quantitative results and an accompanying narrative that compares results across social identity groups.
- 2. Who We Are:** Learn about the demographic composition of the undergraduate students, graduate students, staff, and faculty who comprise UMass Amherst. The campus climate survey sought to extend our knowledge by utilizing more inclusive and conceptually progressive categories (relative to federal reporting categories) to measure race/ethnicity, gender identity, and sexual identity.
- 3. Perceptions of Campus Climate:** Learn about perceptions of the campus environment and tensions driven by social identity. We illustrate and discuss results pertaining to the overall campus climate and focus in on differences in perceptions of diversity and inclusiveness, racial climate, and the university's level of commitment to inclusion.
- 4. Experiences of Unfair Treatment:** Learn about an experiential aspect of campus climate—unfair treatment. The campus climate survey asked individuals whether they experienced unfair treatment during the fall 2016 semester based on 11 social identity characteristics (e.g. race, gender, political view), as well as job level, status, and rank for staff and faculty.
- 5. Classroom Climate Snapshot:** Learn about students' perceptions of their interactions in the classroom context. The undergraduate and graduate student versions of the climate survey included identical questions about classroom experiences. This section is abbreviated, featuring data visualizations only, broken down by race/ethnicity, gender identity, sexual identity, political view, and disability type.
- 6. Workplace Climate Snapshot:** Learn about staff and faculty perceptions of their immediate workplace climate. Although some employees may consider the entire campus to be their workplace, most work within smaller spheres. This section is abbreviated, featuring data visualizations only, broken down by race/ethnicity, gender identity, sexual identity, political view, and job type or rank.



Key Findings

1. Campus ratings of inclusiveness are similar by political view:

- For undergraduate students, graduate students, and faculty, a majority within each political view category (conservative, moderate, liberal) rate the campus on the “inclusive” end of the rating scale (versus “not inclusive”). Political views were not asked of staff.

2. Faculty and staff – high levels of workplace cooperation:

- Within each social identity category, a majority of staff and faculty agree that “there is a spirit of cooperation” in their immediate work environment.

3. Sense of belonging “to a great extent” varies widely:

- Percentages who feel a sense of belonging “to a great extent” are highest (exceeds 50 percent) for undergraduate students and faculty who identify as white, heterosexual, or cisgender men.
 - For undergraduate students only, cisgender women and those with a sensory disability or no disability also have high ratings on belonging.
- Percentages who feel a sense of belonging “to a great extent” are lowest (less than 20 percent) for graduate students and staff who identify as another gender or another sexual orientation, black domestic graduate students, and graduate students with a mental disability.

4. Perceptions of campus climate vary:

- The majority of people in each population rate the campus climate positively. 74 percent of undergraduate students, 61 percent of graduate students, 59 percent of staff, and 61 percent of faculty rate the campus climate a “4” or “5” overall.
 - Among undergraduate students, a majority within each social identity category rate the campus climate positively overall (a “4” or “5” on a 5-point rating scale).
- Yet, perceptions of overall campus climate are less favorable for some social identity groups than for others.
 - Percentages rating the campus climate on the negative end of the scale are highest among black domestic graduate students (43 percent), non-cisgender graduate students (36 percent), graduate students who identify as another sexual identity (31 percent), non-cisgender staff (27 percent), and Latino domestic graduate students (25 percent).

5. Differences persist in perceptions of racial climate:

- The majority of individuals across populations are very satisfied or somewhat satisfied with the racial climate at UMass Amherst.
 - Among undergraduate students, 34 percent are very satisfied and 48 percent are somewhat satisfied. Among graduate students, 31 percent are very satisfied and 45 percent are somewhat satisfied.
 - Among staff, 28 percent are very satisfied and 53 percent are somewhat satisfied. Among faculty, 26 percent are very satisfied and 51 percent are somewhat satisfied.
- Yet, rates of dissatisfaction with the racial climate at UMass Amherst are high for some social identity groups.
 - Over half of black undergraduate students, black domestic graduate students, and black faculty report dissatisfaction with the campus racial climate.
 - Approximately one-third of Latino/a undergraduate students, domestic Latino/a graduate students, multiracial domestic graduate students, ALANA staff, Latino/a faculty, and multiracial faculty express dissatisfaction with the racial climate.

6. Across all four main populations, experiences with unfair treatment on the basis of social identity are too common, and rates are higher within some social identity categories than within others:

- Within each main population, across a majority of the social identity aspects, there is at least one category in which 20 percent or more report experiencing unfair treatment.
- For unfair treatment on the *basis of job level, status, or rank* (staff and faculty only), rates are high (30 percent or more) for most categories.
- For unfair treatment on the *basis of race/ethnicity*, incidence rates are highest for black individuals (and among staff, ALANA individuals).
- For unfair treatment on the *basis of gender identity* among undergraduate students, graduate students, and staff, incidence rates are highest among individuals identifying as trans or genderqueer or another gender. Among faculty, rates are highest among women.
- For unfair treatment on the *basis of political views*, rates are highest among conservatives.

7. Classroom climate: Some students feel silenced in class on the basis of an aspect of their social identity, and some experience course instructors stereotyping, making negative remarks about or telling jokes about an aspect of their social identity:

- 27 percent of undergraduate students and 32 percent of graduate students indicate that they feel silenced in class on the basis of an aspect of their social identity “sometimes” or “often.”
- 13 percent of undergraduate students and 18 percent of graduate students indicate that they experience course instructors stereotyping “sometimes” or “often.”

8. Workplace climate: More than one-third of staff members report experiencing mistreatment in their campus job “sometimes” or “often,” and more than three-fifths of faculty perceive that they do more service than others in their department:

- Within every social identity category, one-third or more of staff report experiencing mistreatment on the job.
- Within nearly every social identity category, a majority of faculty indicate that they do “a bit more” or “much more” service than other faculty in their department or program.

Analysis Next Steps

The comprehensive climate survey report (forthcoming in fall 2017) will be expansive, offering insight about a number of “common core” topics not addressed here. The full report will also cover the population-specific items. Prior to the release of the final report, data will be shared with campus leaders to facilitate timely, data-driven change efforts throughout the organization.